

AM I AT RISK?

What is HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)?

HIV is a virus. It destroys your body's ability to fight off sickness. This virus can cause AIDS. A person with HIV may not know he or she has it. The HIV virus can pass from one person to another.

How can you get HIV?

HIV is found in blood, semen ("cum"), vaginal fluids and breast milk. The virus can be passed to others through contact with any of these body fluids.

You may be at risk if now or in the past...

- ▶ You received blood or blood products before 1985.
- ▶ You have multiple sex partners.
- ▶ You shoot drugs and share needles.
- ▶ You have sex with someone else who shoots drugs and shares needles.
- ▶ You have unsafe sex (sex without a "rubber"/condom) with someone who has the HIV virus.
- ▶ You share used needles for tattooing or body piercing.

How can I avoid getting HIV?

Not having sex and not shooting drugs are the surest ways to prevent getting HIV.

There are other ways to reduce your risk of getting HIV.

Protect yourself if you have sex:

- ▶ Use a new condom each time you have oral, anal, or vaginal sex. Latex or polyurethane is best because HIV can pass through lambskin or natural condoms.
- ▶ Use water-based lubricants, like KY jelly, NOT oils or lotions, like Vaseline or Crisco that can cause a condom to break.

Protect yourself if you use drugs:

Never share drug needles or "works".

Clean drug needles with bleach, leave it sit 30 seconds, repeat 3 times, then rinse 3 times with water between uses.

Mixing sex, drugs, and alcohol is risky. If you are drunk or high it is harder to make good decisions about having sex.

Protect yourself if you are pregnant:

You can pass on HIV to your baby during pregnancy, the birth, or breastfeeding.

Medicines can lower your risk of passing your HIV to your baby during pregnancy. Ask your doctor.

You can't get HIV from hugging, kissing, sharing kitchen utensils, contact with toilets or insect bites.

You can be easily tested for HIV:

A blood test can tell you if you are infected with HIV. You can get this test without giving your name. The test is low cost or free in many places in Montana.